

W A S H I N G T O N
H I G H E R
EDUCATION
C O O R D I N A T I N G B O A R D

March 2005

Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance
Western Washington University

Introduction

Western Washington University (WWU) is seeking approval to establish a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Dance. The proposed program would offer two degree options – a Bachelor of Fine Arts primarily for students preparing for careers in performance and/or graduate study, and a Bachelor of Arts for students with a general interest or for those who are preparing for a teaching endorsement in dance. The dance program would be a traditional daytime program that would build on the current elective curriculum and teaching endorsement offered as a part of the College of Fine and Performing Arts. The program would begin in spring 2005.

Program Need

The faculty considered multiple measures of need in developing the program, including student interest; student need for cultural, artistic, and intellectual growth; economic need (including occupational demand projections); and community needs.

The institutional surveys indicate significant student interest in the program. Among students enrolling in currently offered upper-division dance courses, 75-85 percent of those surveyed over the past several years indicated an interest in majoring in dance. As with other fine arts programs and courses at WWU, the dance program would contribute to the student's cultural, artistic, and intellectual growth.

Students studying dance at the baccalaureate level typically find employment in their field of study, either in live performance and choreography or as teachers in schools or private studios. In addition, many students find employment outside their primary field of study. For those seeking a career in performance, the U.S. Department of Labor indicates that “dancers and choreographers face intense competition for jobs. Only the most talented secure regular employment.” Employment of dancers and choreographers is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2012. Long-term occupational projections

produced by the Washington Employment Security Department place demand for dancers and choreographers at 64-72 per year through 2012.

Since Washington recently established guidelines for primary and supporting K-12 teacher endorsements in the subject area of dance, teachers of dance in the state's public schools will now be required to complete a teaching endorsement in dance in addition to Washington State teaching certification. Employment projections for dance teachers are not available for the K-12 system; although, based on conversations with the Professional Education and Certification office at OSPI, this market is expected to be relatively small. The demand for postsecondary art, dance, and music teachers in Washington (typically requiring a master's degree) is projected to be 68-70 per year through 2012.

The establishment of a dance major in northwest Washington would meet an important community need. The dance program would provide artistic experiences for residents of Bellingham and the surrounding community and help maintain the vitality of a number of related community organizations and groups.

Currently, three schools in Washington offer bachelor's degrees in dance or drama and dance teacher education. Central Washington University graduated one student in each of the past two years with a bachelor's degree in drama and dance teacher education as well as an average of about 10 master's candidates per year in drama and dance teacher education have graduated in the past three years. Cornish College of the Arts and the University of Washington (UW) have graduated a combined average of fewer than 37 students per year with a bachelor's degree in dance and UW graduates approximately three master's candidates annually in dance.

Program Description

The program would offer two degree tracks that share a common set of goals, objectives, and learning outcomes. The program would foster physical and intellectual understanding through a combination of coursework focusing on historic and cultural aspects of dance and related arts, contemporary theory, and technique. The BFA would focus on advanced technique for those students who demonstrate exceptional talent and have an interest in a career in performance or graduate study in dance. The BA option would be more broadly based and cater to those students with a general interest in dance and those who wish to complete the teaching endorsement.

The BA option would require 88-89 credits within the major. These include a mix of upper-division and lower-division courses, including coursework from other departments on campus. The BFA option would require all courses included in the BA, plus additional performance and technique courses, for a total of 98-103 credits within the major.

Admission to the BA and BFA tracks would be competitive and require an audition. The program would enroll 15 FTE students in the first year, reaching 35 FTE students at full enrollment in year three. Students identified as having the greatest potential would be allowed to enroll in the BFA option and would be assessed again prior to their senior year. The university estimates that 30 percent of the students would continue in the BFA option in their senior year. Those students who do not continue in the BFA option would be able to complete the BA option with no loss of time or coursework.

Assessment

Students would be assessed based on a well-defined set of criteria. The program has identified three methods of reviewing student performance: 1) students would regularly reflect on their own performance in a self-evaluation process; 2) faculty would work closely with students to provide frequent feedback and regular evaluations of performance; and 3) the performance aspects of the program would be evaluated by a panel that would include the full faculty and other experts.

The program would also undergo regular internal and external evaluations which, in addition to the typical program and course evaluations, would include long-term follow-up with students at one, five, and ten years post-graduation, as well as periodic external review.

Diversity

Western Washington University has taken steps to improve diversity on campus. This campus-wide effort has attracted increased numbers of students of color to the school. The dance program would offer a curriculum that is designed to be responsive to students from diverse backgrounds, while building cultural understanding through the study of movement. In addition, the dance studio has recently been modified to be more accessible to students with disabilities.

Review Participants

The institution submitted the program to three external experts for review. The chair of the dance department at Cornish College of the Arts submitted a supportive review of the program, citing the quality of the proposed program and the need for a public college or university in Washington to offer such a program. The chair also cited the increasing student demand for dance, as well as the need to provide a teaching endorsement for Washington teachers.

The program was also reviewed by a Certified Laban Movement Analyst (CLMA). Laban Movement Analysts have expertise in observing, recording, describing, researching, and explicating dance and other forms of human movement. The reviewer cited the high quality

and innovative nature of the proposed program, especially noting the inclusion of related course offerings in other departments.

The Artistic Director of Montréal Danse, who has taught as a guest instructor in the dance department, reviewed the program and commented on the high quality of the offering, innovative curriculum, and well-defined assessment protocol.

Eastern Washington University submitted a letter of support indicating that the proposed program would not duplicate any courses or programs it offers.

Program Costs

Although the initial program costs are relatively high (just over \$20,000 per FTE in the first year), by year three, the costs are about equal to the average cost of instruction for upper-division coursework at the university (\$10,400 per FTE). The program would enroll 15 FTE students in the first year, growing to 35 FTE by year three. At full enrollment, the staffing plan calls for 7.67 faculty FTE – including a number of visiting appointments and 2.5 FTE staff. Program costs would be met through a combination of internal reallocation and new enrollment funding.

Staff Analysis

Few options are available within the state for students who wish to study dance. Program graduates would have a range of opportunities in the labor market. Those who choose to pursue a performance career should expect to face an extremely competitive, yet growing, labor market. Student demand for the program appears to be high when compared to the limited range of program options available within the state.

In addition to the projected labor market demand in this area, there are a number of community benefits to offering this type of programming at the regional universities. The program provides an opportunity for the community to connect with the university through attendance at performances. The program would also support the local arts community through service activities and student involvement. Finally, the program would offer talented students an opportunity to learn through a highly interactive working relationship with faculty and would be offered at a reasonable cost, especially considering the high level of student/faculty interaction in the program.

Recommendation

Based on careful review of the program proposal and supplemental sources, the HECB staff recommends approval of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Program at Western Washington University.



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

917 Lakeridge Way SW • PO Box 43430 • Olympia, WA 98504-3430 • (360) 753-7800 • FAX (360) 753-7808 • www.hecb.wa.gov

RESOLUTION NO. 05-03

WHEREAS, Western Washington University proposes to establish a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Dance; and

WHEREAS, Few options are available within the state for students who wish to study dance; and

WHEREAS, The program would build on existing expertise and course offerings to respond to a clearly stated student, employer, and community need; and

WHEREAS, The external reviews attest to the high quality of the program and faculty and to the demand for this program; and

WHEREAS, The assessment and diversity initiatives are appropriate for the program; and

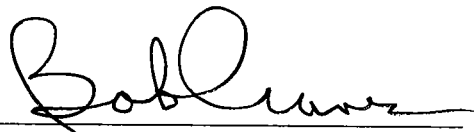
WHEREAS, The program would offer talented students an opportunity to learn through a highly interactive working relationship with faculty and would be offered at a reasonable cost;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Western Washington University proposal to establish a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Dance, effective March 4, 2005.

Adopted:

March 4, 2005

Attest:


Bob Craves, Chair

Roberta Greene, Vice Chair





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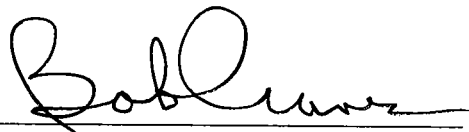
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